[rules] a rule in which each term of [the] an n-gram is a term in the rule, and the topic is the rule consequent, in function block 16. [Optionally, another statistical test can be made to associate a confidence measure with each rule. In the preferred implementation of the invention, the confidence measure is the percentage of time the underlying n-gram occurs in the topic.] Once the preceding steps have been accomplished, all the necessary data is at hand to finish setting up the natural language interface in function block 17. Setting up the dialog manager is accomplished according to the process described in copending patent application Serial No. 09/570,788.

In the Claims:

Please amend the claims as follows. A clean copy of the amended claims is attached.

Claim 1 (Amended). An automated method for setting up [an instance of] a natural language [conversational] interface in a Web site comprising the steps of:

defining a hierarchy of topics into which individual documents or Web pages can be classified;

generating a keyword index for those documents [for an associated search engine]; and

for each [node] topic in the hierarchy, [specifying a mechanism for] associating [an input natural language (NL) query] a set of n-grams to [the node] a topic in the topic hierarchy, which set of n-grams is distinctive to that topic and wherein the n-grams maybe sparse or non-sparse n-grams.

Claim 2 (Amended). The automated method for setting up [an instance of] a natural language [conversational] interface in a Web site recited in claim 1, wherein the step of generating a keyword index comprises the step of extracting sparse n-grams of keywords for each group of pages in the topic

hierarchy.

Claim 3 (Amended). The automated method for setting up [an instance of] a natural language [conversational] interface in a Web site recited in claim 1, further comprising the step of optionally reviewing and editing the keyword index.

Claim 4 (Amended). An automated method for setting up [an instance of] a natural language interface in a Web site comprising the steps of:

automatically inducing a [classification] topic hierarchy by examining a structure of the Web site;

creating [index terms for leaf pages from sparse n-grams] n-grams from pages in the Web site that are associated with a topic in the topic hierarchy wherein the n-grams may be sparse in-grams or non-sparse n-grams; and

creating rules [for a classification engine] from the [sparse] n-grams [of pages reachable from each node in a hierarchy of leaf pages], wherein each [node is a classification category and the rules associated with that category] topic has associated rules that are used to decide if a new input document or query references the [node] topic.

Claim 5 (Amended). The automated method for setting up [an instance of] a natural language interface in a Web site recited in claim 4, wherein the step of creating rules [for a classification engine] is performed automatically and further comprising the optional step of manually editing the rules.

Please add new claim 6 as follows: